

Monticello, NY -- The Sullivan County Senior Legislative Action Committee (SLAC) today honored Congressman Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) for his distinguished career in public service and his longtime commitment to protecting and strengthening Medicare and Social Security as well as fighting for other issues of importance to seniors. Hinchey received the award from the group during a gathering at the Ted Stroebel Recreation Center in Monticello to celebrate the 47th birthday of Medicare.

"I'm honored for the kind recognition from SLAC, and I deeply appreciate all the critical work and advocacy that we've done together over the past years to protect and strengthen Medicare and Social Security," Hinchey said. "Throughout my two decades in Congress, I have been a staunch advocate for strong Medicare and Social Security programs. Those programs have been incredibly efficient and effective for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities. They have saved countless lives, improved the health of our population, provided reliable retirement income, and protected many families from falling into poverty. SLAC has done an outstanding job of advocating for seniors, and I am delighted that they chose to honor me."

Over the last 47 years, Medicare has been an enormous success. Before Medicare, only 51 percent of Americans 65 and older had health care coverage. Today, thanks to Medicare, virtually all Americans 65 and older have health care coverage. In addition, Medicare has increased both seniors' health care and economic security.

In both 2011 and 2012, House Republicans passed a plan that fundamentally transforms Medicare from a guaranteed benefit program into a privatized voucher program for all those now under 55. The amount of the proposed voucher would grow more slowly than health care costs. As a result, according to the non-partisan Congressional Budget Office, the House Republican plan would increase seniors' health care costs by thousands of dollars a year.

In contrast to the House Republican plan to turn Medicare into a voucher program, Hinchey and his fellow House Democrats are committed to preserving Medicare. Throughout his 20 years in office, Hinchey has fought vigorously to protect and strengthen Medicare. Along with his fellow Democrats, Hinchey has enacted several pieces of legislation to extend Medicare's solvency – most recently in the Affordable Care Act that extended solvency for an additional eight years. Hinchey will continue to work to strengthen Medicare's solvency and ensure that Medicare will be there for future generations. He is working to pass a measure to allow Medicare to negotiate the price of prescription drugs, which would save taxpayers \$156 billion over 10 years.

Hinchey, who is retiring from Congress at the end of this year, represented parts of Sullivan County from 1993 to 2002. Since congressional reapportionment in 2002, he has represented the entire county.

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